many closed their eyes in holy dread, and longed to weave a circle round him thrice. Materialism's insanity found its culmination in him; he focused the obscure longings of all who lived by bread alone and found it bitter. The glitter of Imperial Vienna had passed away, and he who had envied it, remained; the War was lost and over, and he who had fallen on his knees in a paroxysm of thankfulness when it began, found his opportunity in the confusion left when it ended; the new Social Democratic Germany, beloved of all the enlightened, with its guitar-playing innocence, and browned sea-bathers, and fraternal delegates, hearty in hand-shaking, and voters voting merrily —this new Germany, to which he belonged, he would bring to completion in a way surprising to its admirers. His roots were in the shifting present, thin soil productive of quick growth. Before he was much known, when his ambitions were still so circumscribed that he could write to a friend: *I do not require much from Hfe. It would be sufficient for me for the movement to last, and for me to earn my living as editor of the *Volkischer Beobachter,'* comrades in the Volunteer Corps, *Wandervogel* enthusiasts, singing, folk dancing, discussing, were delighted when one among them drew in charcoal a swastika on his helmet, and all gaily followed his example. This was the first appearance of a swastika on a German helmet. Thus was it launched, to go on its way, death beckoning.[4]

Perhaps Hitler's greatest asset, abroad as well as at home, was the incredulity which his intentions aroused. They were so confused, seemed so fantastic, that it was difficult to

believe they were seriously entertained even by those who supported him. At first he was laughable; and the fact that Lord Rothermere

[3] Quoted in *The School for Dictators* by Ignazio Silone.

[4] See *The Dear Monster* by G. R. Halkett. The swastika's range in Germany, between folk-dance and goose-step, is apparent in one of its few public appearances in England—on the cover of Kipling*s works. There, too, the range is between *Rewards and Fairies* and *Captains Courageous.* When Hitler adopted the swastika, Kipling abandoned it, complaining that in any case the Nazis used it the wrong way round.